

AMD 17-040

4/10/08

Bell, Leanne S (DOT)

From: Scholl, James W (DOT)
Sent: Thursday, April 10, 2008 9:26 AM
To: Bell, Leanne S (DOT)
Subject: FW: Juneau Access Road

Please log this in as a comment, Thanks!

From: Tim Lydon [mailto:t_lydon@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, April 10, 2008 8:46 AM
To: DOT STIP; david.c.miller@dot.gov
Cc: Palin, Sarah H (GOV); Elton, Kim S (LAA); Rep_Beth_Kerttula@legis.state.ak.us; Rep_Andrea_Doll@legis.state.ak.us; Rep_Peggy_Wilson@legis.state.ak.us; rep_bill_thomas@legis.state.ak.us; Rep_Paul_Seaton@legis.state.ak.us; Rep_Gabrielle_LeDoux@legis.state.ak.us; Rep_Mike_Hawker@legis.state.ak.us; Rep_Bryce_Edgmon@legis.state.ak.us; Rep_Mike_Chenault@legis.state.ak.us; Rep_Kevin_Meyer@legis.state.ak.us
Subject: Juneau Access Road

Dear DOT officials, Governor Palin, House Finance Committee Co-Chairs, and elected representatives,

Please consider the following comments on the proposed "Juneau Access Road."

First, regarding Amendment 17 of the Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan, I urge DOT not to begin any construction of the proposed road this summer. Although ecological impacts are my highest concern, I believe far too little is known about the economic costs of the project to justify any rush to build any part of the road. As Golder Associates recently testified, it is still unknown whether tunnels are necessary. Also, DOT officials recently admitted their own cost estimates are incomplete and likely to increase significantly. Until the citizens of Alaska and their legislators are able to consider a more thorough estimate of financial costs, it is unnecessary and unreasonable for DOT to begin construction on the project. Furthermore, beginning construction is irresponsible before securing better funding for the massive project. Basically, much more work needs to be done on the finances before considering any construction of the project.

For many Juneau Residents and their visitors, Berners Bay is valued recreation resource. It is a place of wild nature, fishing, boating, hiking, camping and more. It is a wealth of biological diversity, too. Beginning construction on the proposed road is not only financially careless, it's a disservice to people like me, who as Juneau residents enjoy Berners Bay for its natural and recreational resources.

Regarding the recent letter by state representatives to the House Finance Committee Co-Chairs: Thank you for your letter. Along with many informed residents, I agree that funding for the "Juneau Access Road" should be withdrawn and re-appropriated to the ferry system. The proposed road is a high-risk venture that has not been adequately researched. Its financial burden is not justified by the evidence presented. Its costs are almost guaranteed to spiral upward. The citizens of Alaska would be better served by spending money on the existing ferry system. With re-organization and proper attention from DOT, the legislature, and the governor, our marine highway system could be efficient, cost-effective, modern, and far more ecologically responsible than the proposed road.

Regarding the overall proposed road: The proposed project is the wrong approach to modernizing transportation in Southeast. Its requirement of a new ferry terminal, its unknown costs, and its destructive impacts on the environment are far too high a price to pay for only a partial replacement of the current ferry system. Its long-term financial costs are unknown and likely too high to justify any hoped-for gains. Its

advertised efficiency is exaggerated and does not take into account road closures, frequent road maintenance, and avalanche dangers, not to mention the added driving for Juneau's residents and visitors.

Ecological concerns should be paramount to anyone considering the project. It will be harmful to the rich Berners Bay ecosystem, including its fishery. It will introduce invasive weeds, poaching, litter and water and air pollution to a currently roadless stretch of coast. It will displace wildlife and mar the scenery that is currently the backbone of Southeast's tourism economy.

Arguments that the road will open new recreation opportunities, improve access, modernize transportation are all misleading and ignore the ecological and financial costs. The argument that we need to build immediately in order to save future costs, is alarmist and ignores basic economic precepts.

Thank you for considering my comments and please put an end to the Juneau Access Road proposal.

Tim Lydon
Juneau, AK

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